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CIA spies claim data is disputed

MOSCOW (AP)—The Soviet Union contended Friday that its security forces caught several CIA agents "red handed . . . of late," but the Americans cited in a Pravda article were last based in Moscow at least four years ago.

The Communist Party newspaper, in its sharpest attack on so-called U.S. espionage in the Soviet Union in at least two years, accused the CIA of attempting to secure "secret information about the defense potential, the armed forces, about targets earmarked by the Pentagon for nuclear strikes and about the economy" of the Soviet Union.

Pravda identified the alleged spies as "Kelly and his wife," "Martha Peterson," and "Vincent and Becky Crockett."

PUBLISHED DIPLOMATIC registers list an Edmund W. Kelly as an American military attache here in 1973. Martha D. Peterson was a third secretary at the U.S. Embassy who left the Soviet Union in the summer of 1977.

The Crockett couple do not appear on diplomatic lists but sources here said they were attached to the embassy in 1977.

Pravda said, "Kelly and his wife, who are CIA staffers, were detained at the time when they were placing instructions and espionage materials for agents of the U.S. intelligence."

"Attache of the U.S. Embassy Martha Peterson was expelled from the U.S.S.R. for espionage activities," Pravda said, adding, "Soon afterward Soviet security bodies uncovered another spying couple, Vincent and Becky Crockett."

The U.S. Embassy refused to comment on Pravda's charges, citing its policy of not answering Soviet accusations about U.S. espionage.

IN WASHINGTON, the CIA said the Pravda article was "the usual Soviet propaganda which is devoid of truth."

The Soviet government newspaper Izvestia first mentioned Martha Peterson in 1978, contending she was expelled for espionage activities and that then-U.S. Ambassador Malcolm Toon had requested that the matter be kept quiet.

Izvestia's charges came just over a week after the U.S. revealed the discovery in the Moscow embassy of secret Soviet listening devices linked by an underground tunnel to an adjoining apartment building.

Friday's Pravda attack came less than a week after FBI Director William Webster contended that several hundred Soviet agents of the KGB secret police were working in the U.S., many of them posing as diplomats.

PRAVDA CHARGED, "Espionage, sabotage and terror, slander and misinformation with the use of the radio, the use of radio-electronic equipment, (use) of the latest means of technology and chemistry, spy satellites, ships and aircraft" . . . buildings of official representations crammed with special instruments, numerous bases for radio intelligence close to the Soviet borders—all this put at the service of espionage and subversive activity against the U.S.S.R."

The Pravda report also mentioned a man identified as V. Kalinin, a Soviet citizen convicted in 1975 of spying for the United States.

"He was detained while taking an espionage container out of a cache," Pravda said. "Faced with irrefutable evidence of his criminal activity, Kalinin had to admit his espionage activities, his ties with representatives of the CIA. He pleaded guilty to committing the most grievous crime against the motherland—espionage."

"The military collegium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Court sentenced Kalinin to the highest measure of punishment—execution by a firing squad," the paper said.

It was not clear whether the sentence had been carried out.